

## **OPENING STATEMENT**

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

“State Perspectives: How EPA’s Power Plan Will Shut Down Power Plants”  
Environment Subcommittee Hearing

September 11, 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for being here this morning.

EPA’s Clean Power Plan is a step in the right direction at the right time. The scientific evidence shows we cannot afford to wait, but must act now if we are to stand a chance of lessening the impacts of climate change. Record temperatures, an increase in heavy rain events, and rising seas are a few examples of what Americans are confronting now and can expect to see more frequently in the coming years.

As the largest source of carbon pollution, cutting emissions from power plants is the key to any solution. This is why I am supportive of the Clean Power Plan and its goal to reduce carbon emissions by 32 percent by 2030 from the power sector.

The final rule we will be discussing today is responsive to the more than 4 million public comments received by EPA. It sets reasonable limits that take into account the characteristics of each state. It provides states with an additional two years to formulate and implement their compliance plans. It responds to concerns about grid reliability by including a “reliability safety valve” and requiring states to consider reliability concerns in their state implementation plans.

And finally, the central feature of the rule is the enormous flexibility it provides to states. EPA is not prescribing a specific set of measures, but instead, states will choose what goes into their plans, and they can work alone or as part of a multi-state effort to achieve meaningful carbon reductions.

Today, I suspect that we will hear some of the same old arguments about the Clean Power Plan that we hear about nearly every regulation issued by the EPA. That it will cause nothing but harm to our economy. That the federal government is overstepping its authority, that the rule is unnecessary, and that it won’t make any difference in the long-run.

However, we know that these assertions are just not true. Rather, as history has shown us time and again, stricter pollution limits have invariably led to innovation and the creation of new technologies that end up creating jobs while protecting our environment. I am confident American industry will continue this record of innovation and job creation as the Clean Power Plan is implemented.

Additionally, and perhaps, most importantly, the Clean Power Plan sends a strong and much needed signal to the rest of the world about the seriousness of the United States in addressing climate change. Such a position is critical to meaningful international engagement on the issue.

I recognize that implementing the Clean Power Plan will not be easy, and that there are real costs associated with transitioning to a low carbon economy. But the bottom line is that the costs of inaction are even greater. I look forward to today's discussion and to hearing more about how we can achieve the emissions targets in the Clean Power Plan.

Thank you and I yield back the balance of my time.